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THAT HIDEOUS STRENGTH

by C.S. Lewis



THE AUTHOR

Clive Staples Lewis (1898-1963) was born in Belfast, Northern Ireland; his father was a lawyer and his mother a mathematician. She died when Lewis was nine, and the trauma eventually drove him to atheism in his teens. He read voraciously from his youth and began writing at an early age. He served briefly in World War I and graduated from Oxford in 1923. He returned to Oxford to teach English at Magdalen College (1925-1954), then moved to Cambridge as Professor of Medieval and Renaissance Literature (1954-1963). He died on the same day that John F. Kennedy was assassinated - November 22, 1963.

Not surprisingly, reading and conversations with fellow scholars led to Lewis' conversion. Christian writers such as George MacDonald and G.K. Chesterton led him to question the arrogance of his atheism, and ultimately the exercise of his imagination along with his reason brought him to Christ. He went on to become one of the greatest spokesmen for the Christian faith in the twentieth century.

Lewis preferred the company of men to women, living for most of his life with his older brother Warren and spending long and delightful afternoons in discussions with fellow writers at the *Eagle and Child* pub in Oxford. The writers who gathered there styled themselves the Inklings, and included J.R.R. Tolkien, Owen Barfield and Charles Williams. He did, however, care for the mother of his college roommate, Paddy Moore. The two had vowed to care for the other's families should either one be killed in the war, and Lewis kept his promise, allowing Mrs. Moore to live with him and his brother until her death in 1951. Finally, and most unexpectedly, Lewis married - having carried on a lengthy correspondence with Joy Davidman, an American Jewish divorcee, the two fell in love when she visited him in England and married in 1953. Their marriage was a happy one, but was cut short when Joy died of cancer in 1960.

Lewis' writings display an enormous range and virtuosity in varying styles and genres. They include the children's stories for which he is perhaps most famous (*The Chronicles of Narnia*, 1950-1956), autobiographical writings (*The Pilgrim's Regress*, 1933; *Surprised by Joy*, 1955; *A Grief Observed*, 1961), his Space Trilogy (*Out of the Silent Planet*, *Perelandra*, *That*

Hideous Strength, 1938-1945), and theological and apologetic writings (*The Problem of Pain*, 1940; *The Screwtape Letters*, 1942; *Mere Christianity*, 1943; *The Abolition of Man*, 1943; *The Great Divorce*, 1945; *Miracles*, 1947; and *God in the Dock*, published in 1970), along with literary criticism and essays on a variety of other topics.

That Hideous Strength (1945) was the final novel in Lewis' Space Trilogy, and the only one of the three to take place entirely on earth. The forces of evil are taking their last stand through the agency of the National Institute of Coordinated Experiments (N.I.C.E.), which serves as a symbol of the ultimate consequences of naturalistic science, and in particular the social sciences, in its application to man himself. Lewis not only brings in the angelic mythology of the previous books of the trilogy, but also incorporates the Arthurian legend and the symbolism of the Tower of Babel. In the same way that *Perelandra* serves as the fictional counterpart of *The Screwtape Letters*, so *That Hideous Strength* is the fictional counterpart of *The Abolition of Man*, written just two years earlier.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- Mark Studdock - A professor of sociology at Bracton College in Edgestow, he is gradually drawn into the machinations of the men who run the N.I.C.E.
- Jane Studdock - Mark's wife, she is fearful of losing him and aghast at what she sees him becoming. In order to save him, she turns to Ransom for help. She is also a visionary who is coveted by both sides in the struggle because of her dreams.
- Elwin Ransom - A philologist who had previously traveled to Mars and Venus, and now leads the forces arrayed against the evil seeking to dominate Earth. He is now going by the name of Mr. Fisher-King, and is also known as the Pendragon.
- Cecil Dimble - A Fellow of Northumberland College and Jane Studdock's tutor, he is a kindly old man who is part of the force opposing the N.I.C.E. He and his wife move to St. Anne's after the N.I.C.E. takes over Bragdon Wood.
- Margaret Dimble - Dr. Dimble's wife, she watches over his students like a mother hen; she also provides motherly support for Jane.
- Ivy Maggs - Jane's housekeeper, she is another of the St. Anne's contingent; her husband is in prison, and is taken by the men of the N.I.C.E. for "conditioning."
- Tom Maggs - Ivy's husband, imprisoned for theft, is released from Belbury by Merlin.
- Camilla Denniston - A young faculty wife whom Jane meets at St. Anne's.
- Arthur Denniston - A young academic who was beaten out for a Bracton Fellowship by Mark Studdock. He and his wife are among the company at St. Anne's.

- Grace Ironwood - Ransom's personal physician at St. Anne's.
- Andrew MacPhee - A skeptic who is one of Ransom's oldest friends; he is part of the company at St. Anne's despite his unbelief.
- Mr. Bultitude, Baron Corvo, and Pinch - A bear, a jackdaw, and a cat who are tame under the control of the Pendragon and live in the Manor at St. Anne's. The bear plays a key role in the destruction of Belbury.
- Merlin - Arthur's tutor, buried for more than a thousand years, who comes to life and assists the remnants of true Logres in their hour of greatest need.
- Curry - The sub-warden of Bracton College.
- James Busby - The bursar of Bracton College.
- Dick Devine (Lord Feverstone) - A wealthy peer who is nominally a Fellow of Bracton but rarely appears there; he is a prominent figure in the N.I.C.E.
- Horace Jules - A popular novelist who is the head of the N.I.C.E., but is in reality a figurehead who exists to put an innocuous public face on the organization.
- John Wither - The Deputy Director of the N.I.C.E. and the real power behind the organization.
- William Hingest (Bill the Blizzard) - A Fellow of Bracton in physical chemistry generally mocked by the Progressive Element, he is recruited by the N.I.C.E., but becomes disgusted by what they are doing and resigns, advising Mark to do the same. He turns up dead shortly thereafter.
- Steele - The head of the Sociology Department in the N.I.C.E.
- Filostrato - An Italian physiologist and eunuch who is part of the N.I.C.E.
- "Fairy" Hardcastle - The head of the Institutional Police at the N.I.C.E.
- Reverend Straik - A clergyman associated with the N.I.C.E. who is a caricature of the views of liberal theologians of the day.
- Professor Frost - A sharp-faced little man with a pointed beard about whom Jane often has dreams, he, along with Wither, is the only full initiate of the Institute.
- Francois Alcasan - An Arab radiologist who is guillotined for poisoning his wife, but whose disembodied head is kept in a state of animation by the heads of the N.I.C.E. The evil Masters speak through this head.

PLOT SUMMARY

The central figures in the story are a young married couple, Mark and Jane Studdock. He is a professor of sociology at Bracton College in Edgestow, while she is working on her doctorate in the writings of John Donne. They have only been married for six months, but already their marriage is on the rocks because Mark is totally absorbed with his work at the college that Jane hardly ever sees him. One night Jane has a horrible nightmare in which she sees a prisoner in a French prison. A man comes over and speaks to him, then twists off his head and carries it away. The head then somehow changes into that of a man with a long white beard who is being exhumed in an old churchyard. The next morning she sees a picture in the newspaper of the first man she had seen in her dream - an Arab scientist named Alcasan who had been guillotined for poisoning his wife.

Mark, meanwhile, is thoroughly enjoying being drawn into the inner circle - the Progressive Element - in his college. One day he and Curry, the sub-warden, discuss the coming business meeting at which Bragdon Wood, long the pride of the college, is to be sold to the National Institute of Coordinated Experiments (N.I.C.E.). After a brief interlude during which the unidentified narrator (Lewis himself, as was the case in the other parts of the trilogy), speaks of his own visit to Bragdon Wood, noting in particular the ancient well at its center identified in legend with the burial site of Merlin, we move to the College Meeting. Here the Progressive Element smoothly manipulates the proceedings so that the Fellows agree to the sale of Bragdon Wood to the N.I.C.E. without really understanding the implications of the deal.

Jane goes out shopping and meets Margaret Dimble, the wife of her tutor in college. She invites Jane home for lunch. There Jane learns that the Dimble cottage is to be condemned for the N.I.C.E. building project, and that Mark was one of those who worked for its approval. When Mrs. Dimble asks how she is doing, Jane breaks down crying and tells her about her loneliness and her nightmare of the previous night. During lunch, Dr. Dimble talks about the Arthurian legend. When his conversation turns to Merlin, Jane remembers the old man in her dream and nearly faints. She is becoming concerned that she might be having a mental breakdown. The Dimbles say nothing at this point, but tell her that if she must see someone about her fears, she must come to them first rather than going to some psychiatrist.

Meanwhile, Mark is having dinner with Curry, Busby, and Feverstone. They talk about the grand schemes of the N.I.C.E. and its application of science to societal control. After Curry and Busby leave, Feverstone approaches Mark about taking a position with the N.I.C.E. as a sort of propagandist for its version of societal progress. Mark is intrigued by the possibility and accepts an invitation to meet John Wither, the real power in the N.I.C.E., at Belbury, the temporary headquarters of the group; Jules, a popular science fiction writer, serves as the organization's public face, but is no more than a figurehead. During their conversation, Feverstone mentions Weston, the late physicist, who according to Feverstone understood the fundamental concepts on which the N.I.C.E. was based, but was murdered by an enemy of progress whose name he does not at this time reveal. Mark then goes home and finds Jane in tears. He tells her that he plans to spend the weekend with Wither and Feverstone, whom she dislikes at first sight, thus providing no comfort at all. After he leaves, she decides to take up the offer made by the Dimbles - that if she was in trouble, she should visit a certain Miss Ironwood in St. Anne's. Mark and Jane thus undertake their separate journeys, he full of expectation, she full of fears.

Mark meets Wither, a polite old man who speaks in riddles and circumlocutions, and becomes frustrated with his inability to find out anything definite about the position he is to assume. He is told that the cost of joining the N.I.C.E. club is two hundred pounds, which is more than he has in the bank, but takes comfort in the salary of 1500 pounds that he has been offered. After spending several uncomfortable hours feeling like an outsider in the building, he encounters William Hingest, the most prominent scientist among the Bracton scholars. Hingest tells him that the College Meeting was a sham, that the N.I.C.E. had the power to compel the sale of the land and simply wanted Bracton to take the blame for the coming spoliation of Bragdon Wood. Hingest can't understand why the organization would want the woods in the first place, but tells Mark that he has decided to leave the N.I.C.E. because he is becoming increasingly uncomfortable with their activities, and advises Mark to do the same before it is too late. He then introduces Mark to Steele, the head of the department in which he would be working if he accepted the appointment, but Steele seems to know nothing about him and blames Feverstone for his usual antics. He then meets Filostrato, a fat physiologist, and "Fairy" Hardcastle, a powerfully-built and intimidating woman who is the head of the Institutional Police. Fairy embarrasses Mark by telling him all kinds of stories - the kind men tell one another when women are not present. She speaks of executions and tortures and insists that the N.I.C.E. can accomplish more with experimental remedial treatment than with old-fashioned punishment. At dinner, Bill Hingest again warns Mark to get out of the N.I.C.E. while he can, then sets off for home.

When Jane arrives at St. Anne's, she is greeted by Camilla Denniston, the wife of the man whom Mark beat out for his Fellowship at Bracton. Camilla takes her to Miss Ironwood, who asks her questions about her dreams. Miss Ironwood looks exactly as Jane had imagined her (not only that, but a book in one of the rooms contained the same words she had imagined as well), and Jane is startled by the accuracy of her dreams. Miss Ironwood tells her that she has inherited from her family line the gift of a visionary - one who sees actual events before they occur. She warns her that she can seek to get rid of her gift through psychiatry, in which course of action she will surely fail, she can use her gift for the benefit of humanity by allowing herself to be used by the company Miss Ironwood represents, or she will surely fall into the clutches of evil people who desire her gift and have no concern for her life or happiness or that of anyone else (a reference to the N.I.C.E.). Jane, angry that Miss Ironwood offers no help and wanting nothing to do with any visionary gift, leaves the house. On the way home, she thinks of her resentment about anything that compromises her independence - marriage, children, and certainly involvement with some mysterious "company." When she arrives, she gets a phone call from Mrs. Dimble, who is very upset and wants to stay with Jane for the night. Mrs. Dimble tells Jane that they have been evicted from their house by the N.I.C.E., who have already uprooted their trees and torn up their garden. Dozens of other houses are also being destroyed. Jane offers to let the Dimbles stay with her, but Mrs. Dimble tells her that they will be staying at St. Anne's. Ivy Maggs has also been turned out of her house and will be moving to St. Anne's as well. That night Jane has another nightmare - a man is pulled from a car and beaten to death by three thugs despite his efforts to fight them off. The next morning Jane goes into town. There she meets Curry, who tells her of Hingest's death. She now knows that she saw the event in her dream the previous night.

The next morning at Belbury, Mark meets Rev. Straik, who rambles on about the coming of the Kingdom of God through the total destruction of society. Violence is necessary to wipe out all who oppose the judgment that is the true message of Jesus, and the N.I.C.E. and all instruments of power, such as communism, are instruments in His hand. At this point Mark

discovers that his wallet is missing; it contained little money, but did have some letters in it. At the committee meeting that morning, Mark hears that William Hingest had been bludgeoned to death the night before. Fortunately, however, Fairy Hardcastle and her police force had been quick to arrive on the scene, and Scotland Yard had made no difficulty about leaving the case to her able investigators. After the meeting he is pulled aside by Cosser, Steele's assistant, who tells him he has a job for him to do. He is to write a paper justifying a large public works project planned by the N.I.C.E. The river passing through Edgestow is to be diverted and a reservoir is to be created for a new water supply. This reservoir would put the entire town of Cure Hardy under water - a lovely historic village that was a popular tourist spot. Mark's paper must explain that Cure Hardy is unsanitary and contains undesirable social elements, and thus ought to be replaced by a new model village several miles away. Mark and Cosser visit Cure Hardy the next day, and Mark finds it a pleasant sort of town and thinks Cosser a bore. He is beginning to have serious reservations about joining the N.I.C.E., but decides to give the matter more time. That night he surprises Jane by coming home unannounced. He tells her about his experiences at Belbury in rather innocuous terms, says nothing about Cure Hardy, and she says nothing about her dreams or St. Anne's.

That night at dinner in the Common Room at Bracton, the Fellows can hardly speak because of the din of the men and machinery tearing up Bragdon Wood. Feverstone tells Curry that Mark will not be coming back to the college and suggests a likely replacement. He also reminds him that Hingest will need to be replaced as well. As the noise outside grows louder, shots are fired, screams are heard, and rocks come crashing through the beautiful stained-glass windows of the Common Room.

When Mark returns to Belbury, he gets a rude awakening. Steele and Cosser treat him as an unwanted intruder. He then makes the mistake of going to the Deputy Director, who tells him to come back when he has an appointment. Fairy Hardcastle then tells him about the propaganda work of the Institute - his real job, since he is valued more as a skilled writer than as a sociologist. By this time, Mark is convinced that he should not remain with the organization. When he sees Feverstone again and asks him about the false information about his resignation that had been given to Bracton, Feverstone stonewalls him and tells him to deal with his own problems. While walking around considering what to do, he passes a barn from which emanates the howls and grunts of all sorts of animals; he knew the Institute did animal experiments, but had no idea that they were being carried out on such a large scale. When he finally gets in to see Wither, he gets the usual unsatisfactory vagueness with no clear-cut answers. Upon leaving the office, he receives a letter from Bracton in which Curry regretfully accepts his resignation and asks his advice on finding a replacement. He tries to write a letter in response to do some damage control, but now realizes that if he should decide to leave the N.I.C.E. he would also lose his Fellowship at Bracton.

Jane, meanwhile, has been going to town daily to try and clear her mind. One day she meets Camilla Denniston and her husband Arthur. They tell her a little more about the company of which they are a part, in particular noting that it is led by a great traveler known as Mr. Fisher-King or the Pendragon, and that their work is vital for saving the human race. They again ask her to join, but she is reluctant to do so, especially because of her fierce desire to retain her independence. Given the fright of the dream about Hingest's death, however, she agrees to share any future dreams with them.

Mark again goes to see Wither, this time to see if the appointment he had tried to turn down is still available. Wither is harsh with him, but does offer a probationary position at 40% of the originally-discussed salary. He still refuses to give Mark any specifics as to a job description or concrete responsibilities. Mark soon discovers through Fairy Hardcastle that his writing skills are needed to rehabilitate Alcasan in the public mind through some well-timed and carefully-worded newspaper articles. Meanwhile, the N.I.C.E. is grabbing more and more land in Edgestow, all of which makes the Progressive Element at Bracton increasingly unpopular. Trouble breaks out in the town more frequently, and the Institutional Police become an ever-stronger presence. Mark gains greater acceptance in the inner circle at Belbury until one day he is asked to draft some newspaper articles concerning a riot in Edgestow. The riot is being planned by Fairy and her police force, and Mark's job is to prepare articles arguing that the riots represent unacceptable actions by backwards factions in society against the progress of the N.I.C.E., and demonstrate the necessity of the Institutional Police being given free rein in the town to restore order. Mark writes the articles in question and uncomfortable senses himself falling deeper and deeper into a web of criminal behavior.

Jane continues to have dreams, one of which involves a sharp-faced man with a little pointed beard sitting by her bedside and taking notes. Later she dreams that she is in a dark cave. As she walks through the cave, she approaches a slab on which lies what appears to be a corpse, bearded and wearing a coarse robe. Behind her is another bearded figure, this one young and radiating light. When she goes into Edgestow the next day, she sees the man in the pointed beard who had figured prominently in several of her dreams. She is frightened by this, and quickly heads for St. Anne's, where she is welcomed and ushered into the presence of the Pendragon himself. He is an invalid, weakened by a wound in his foot that never stops bleeding and refuses to heal, and appears to be neither old nor young, though he is in fact almost fifty. He reminds Jane of her old ideas of King Arthur or King Solomon. Ransom (for this is the Ransom of the first two books of the Space Trilogy) tells her that the fact that she lacks her husband's consent for joining the company is a problem, especially since he is working for the N.I.C.E. Though she finds his view of marriage horribly old-fashioned, he insists that it is not his view, but that of those he serves. She cannot at that time stay at St. Anne's but must return and see her husband again, attempting if at all possible to get him to leave Belbury, but without telling him anything about the company or her dreams. Suddenly the room is filled with an undescrivable sense of Presence, and Jane is told to leave immediately.

When she gets off the train in Edgestow, she finds herself in the middle of the riot engineered by the Institutional Police. She tries to avoid the chaos, but soon gets lost. As she goes down a street that looks familiar, she is captured and arrested by some of Fairy's police. She is taken before the Fairy herself, who soon finds out her identity and begins to torture her with cigarette burns to try to find out where she had been. Jane instinctively knows she must reveal nothing, and keeps silent. Fairy decides she must be taken to Belbury, but during the trip the car is overtaken by rioters and Jane escapes, returning to St. Anne's in a very shaken condition. After spending the day at St. Anne's relaxing and recuperating, she has a shocking encounter with Mr. Bultitude, a tame bear who lives in the house. She also meets Andrew MacPhee, an old friend of the Director, but a skeptic with regard to his stories of space travel and eldila. Jane still has trouble getting used to the egalitarian arrangements at the manor house, where everyone shares the work and all have equal standing.

When the Fairy returns to Belbury, Wither criticizes her lack of restraint in her treatment of Jane and reveals that the only reason Mark has been invited to Belbury to begin with is so the leaders can gain access to Jane and her visions. Wither remarks that her mind is becoming less and less accessible, and deduces from this that she is coming under the influence of the Enemy. Mark then hears that the riot was very successful, and is pleased to see that his articles were printed in several newspapers. His next task is to promote Feverstone for the post of emergency governor of Edgestow. Miss Hardcastle then comes to him to tell him that Wither is mightily displeased with him because he has not taken steps to bring his wife to Belbury. At dinner, he has a conversation with Filostrato in which the latter speaks of the eventual necessity of purging all organic life from the planet and transforming man himself into an entirely artificial being. Mark is then summoned to appear before the Head; he finds that the title is a literal one - it is the disembodied head of Alcasan, the executed murderer, which is kept alive by fluids pumped through tubes. It is through him that the real Masters of the N.I.C.E. communicate.

That night Jane has a dream in which she sees the head of Alcasan; she is terrified to find that Mark is in the room with the monstrosity. Ransom then tells Jane that Mark is in great danger, and that she must do all she can to convince him to leave Belbury before it is too late. Mark, meanwhile, is being pressured by the Fairy to bring Jane to Belbury. He has just about decided to leave the N.I.C.E. at this point. He pushes his way into Wither's office, but finds the man in a trance, neither hearing nor seeing though his eyes are open. He then flees the grounds, but encounters Wither walking along the path he intends to use for his escape. In despair, he returns to Belbury. MacPhee, meanwhile, is telling Jane something of Ransom's history, though he professes to believe none of it. Camilla Denniston then explains to Jane that Ransom's experience in space means that he will never die - that he will be one of the few, like Enoch and Elijah, who will simply be taken away by the eldila. Ransom is becoming increasingly concerned about what the N.I.C.E. is searching for under Bragdon Wood. He has become convinced that they seek Merlin - the old man seen by Jane in her dreams - in order to use his powers over nature to advance their cause. The company, obviously, must somehow find him first.

Back at Belbury, the pressure on Mark is increasing. Fairy Hardcastle reveals that his lost wallet has been found; according to her, it was found near the body of the murdered scientist Hingest. She implies that, should he fail to bring his wife to Belbury as soon as possible, the evidence will be turned over to the police and Mark will be arrested, tried, and doubtless hanged for murder. Mark is told to write a letter to Jane to bring her to them, but instead he flees the compound. He makes his way to Edgestow, which looks now like a town conquered by an invader and under occupation in time of war. Naturally, Jane is not at home, so he tries to find Dimble. When he reaches the professor, Dimble refuses to tell him where Jane is, but offers to help him if he really wants to get out of the N.I.C.E. Mark, astounded by how much Dimble knows about the organization, hesitates and asks for time to think about it, but before he can get back to Dimble, he is arrested for the murder of William Hingest. Jane, meanwhile, has had another dream in which the cave where she had previously seen Merlin was empty. Ransom decides that the situation is desperate and they must try to reach Merlin before the N.I.C.E. does. He sends Denniston to drive the car, Dimble, who speaks Old Solar, and Jane, whose dreams will allow her to recognize the entrance to the cave, to find Merlin and bring him back to St. Anne's if at all possible. They reach the right area and see a fire in the woods in the distance. They move toward it with great trepidation, not knowing what they might encounter there. When they reach the fire, they see no one, though they detect some movement as they approach. The site appears to be

nothing more than a tramp's campfire. They start to leave, but then a huge man on horseback rushes past them in the darkness.

Back at Belbury, the Fairy, Wither, and Frost are discussing what is to be done. The Institutional Police had followed two well-known Christian professors at the university with whom Mark might have spoken, but they had discovered nothing (Fairy lacked enough men to cover Dimble's movements; in any case, she considered him a nonentity). Hardcastle wants to torture Mark to get the address where Jane is saying out of him. Both Wither and Frost argue that this could well be counterproductive, both because he may not actually know, and because if they do succeed in bringing Jane to Belbury and she finds Mark in a ruined condition, the shock may leave her unable to see visions. Frost proposes trying to seduce him with power. For that purpose, he goes to visit Mark in his cell. Mark is convinced he is soon to die, and is determined to resist the monsters of the N.I.C.E. with whatever strength he has left. As Frost talks to him about the Masters they serve (he calls them Macrobes) and invites Mark into the true Inner Circle, Mark is tempted, but for once in his life resists. Wither receives regular reports from the patrols searching for Merlin, but they find the crypt empty. Suddenly Frost's conversation with Mark is interrupted by an urgent message - Merlin has been found! He goes to the main room of the mansion and sees a bedraggled and bearded man, completely naked and unconscious. When he begins to rouse himself, attempts to speak to him in Latin avail nothing, but he does respond well to meat, cheese, and beer, then goes back to sleep. Frost and Wither decide to summon Straik and Studdock to watch over the new arrival until he wakes; they also hope that Straik, who knows Welsh, might be able to communicate with the man.

Meanwhile, at St. Anne's, MacPhee and the women are arguing as usual, this time over the question of whether Mr. Bultitude and Pinch can really be described as friends. Suddenly they hear the pounding of a horse's hooves outside. When MacPhee opens the door, the rider seen by Jane and the others is on their doorstep. He is dressed like a tramp, but he and Ransom are soon bantering with one another in Latin. Merlin (for it is he) puts MacPhee to sleep with his magic, while the women are shut out of the kitchen when the wind causes the door to slam on them. Soon the two men are conversing in Old Solar about the mysteries of the planets. When Ransom not only demonstrates his knowledge of those mysteries but also tells Merlin that he himself is the Pendragon, the old magician kneels at his feet in submission.

When Denniston, Dimble, and Jane return, they find MacPhee still asleep. They wake him with some difficulty, then go into the back of the house and find the others, including the animals, asleep as well. Moving upstairs, they discover Ransom and Merlin, both clothed in magicians' robes, deep in conversation. Dimble, who understands the language they are speaking, translates for the others. Merlin is accusing Jane of being the most wicked of women because she was to have borne the child who would eradicate evil in Logres for a thousand years, but she and Mark had instead chosen to be childless. A hundred generations of preparation had led to this day, but all for naught. Dimble and MacPhee demand an explanation, and Ransom assures them that, contrary to their fears, Merlin is on their side rather than that of their enemies. He then tells them to wake the women, have them prepare a room for Merlin, then all go to bed. The men have a conference the next day, but most of it is spent helping Merlin to understand the age in which he has awakened - such things as that the Pendragon is not the King of England, nor does he want to be. Many in the company are concerned that Merlin might be more of a hindrance than a help, but Dimble explains that he has contacts with nature that have long since become impossible, and that could aid their cause if used rightly.

Ransom and Merlin then spend time alone in Ransom's room. Merlin is still puzzled over the strangeness of the culture into which he has emerged. When he offers to contact his old companions and brew a cure for Ransom's heel, the Pendragon refuses, insisting that he must bear that pain until the end. Merlin offers to call up the spirits of nature with whom he had dealt in the past, but Ransom tells him it is forbidden, and that it would do no good in any case. Merlin then wonders why he was summoned at all if he could not use his former powers. Ransom tells him that it was for his own salvation, but also assures him that he is far from powerless. They speak of the N.I.C.E. as the Hideous Strength, and say that no such threat has arisen among men since the Tower of Babel. To counter this threat, the Powers of Heaven will descend; Merlin's task is to be the channel through whom they act. The old magician cries out in agony, but submits to the will of Maleldil. Merlin then asks if no help can be found from the king, or his councillors, or the priests, or even from those abroad, but Ransom assures him that the shadow of evil has fallen over all the earth. But because the enemy has voluntarily broken the barrier between Earth and the Heavens, the powers of Deep Heaven will destroy them.

Mark is again visited by Frost in his cell, and he pretends to give in to his offer of initiation into the mysteries of the Macrobes. Frost takes him through the room in which Alcasan's head is mounted, surprisingly ignoring the monstrosity, and leads him into another room, one where everything - the shape of the room, the orientation of the door, the marks on the ceiling, even the pictures on the wall - are just slightly out of kilter. The purpose is to purge him of all values and judgments of the way things ought to be. Mark finds, however, that the room only makes him more aware of the Normal and the Right, and determined to resist with whatever time and energy remained to him the horrors of the Macrobes and their servants. Next he is led into a bedroom where their recent guest, whom they think to be Merlin, is sleeping. When he wakes up, Mark tries to talk with him and finds that he speaks English, albeit of a very uneducated variety. The man is, in fact, the tramp whose camp Merlin had invaded, putting him to sleep and taking all his clothes in the process. Mark's training continues with hours in the skewed room, where he is forced to perform minor obscenities by Frost. During his time with the tramp, the two get along well, and he manages to convince the man to keep quiet when the people from the N.I.C.E. are in the room. Mr. Bultitude, meanwhile, escapes from the garden and is picked up by an animal van from the N.I.C.E.

Back at St. Anne's, the women are decorating the cottage on the grounds for Ivy Maggs and her husband, who is to be released from jail that day after serving a sentence for petty theft. After the room is finished, Jane has a bizarre dream in which a gigantic woman clothed in red and a group of dwarfs tear the room apart and fill it with flowers. When she wakes, only the bed has been disturbed. She goes immediately to see Ransom, who tells her that many things exist in the world of which he has no knowledge. He then speaks to her about her understanding of marriage, and tells her that masculine and feminine are ideas that transcend the realm of the human, and that she must yield to the ultimate masculine whether she likes it or not - that, in fact, she must become a Christian. He then tells her that the rulers of the planets would descend on St. Anne's that night and inhabit Merlin, who would then go to Belbury in response to their advertisement for a specialist in ancient languages. Through him the destruction of the N.I.C.E. would begin, and would be completed by the evil Masters themselves, who have no use for their slaves when they have failed in their assignments. Grace Ironwood then enters and tells Ransom that Ivy Maggs is distraught because her husband has not been released, but has been taken to Belbury for "rehabilitation." When Jane goes out into the garden to consider what the Director had told her,

she meets Maleldil and yields herself to Him completely. That night, while the company gathers in the kitchen, Ransom and Merlin wait upstairs for the coming of the great beings who rule the planets. Viritrilbia, Perelandra, Malacandra, Lurga, and Glund arrive in turn, each having an effect on the behavior of the humans as they impart the essences of language, love, war, heaviness, and song. Each then enters into Merlin. The next morning, Merlin shaves his beard and is dropped off near Belbury; all know he has little time left on this earth.

At Belbury, Mark is awakened in the tramp's room by the entrance of three men - Frost, Wither, and a Basque priest who is the real Merlin in disguise. Merlin approaches the tramp and gains control over his mind, enabling him to speak in a strange language unknown to either Wither or Frost. Merlin then "translates" the tramp's words, telling Frost and Wither that the tramp is indeed Merlin, and that he must be given appropriate clothing and shown all of Belbury's secrets, including the Head, the menagerie, and the criminals upon whom experiments are being performed. Wither and Frost are skeptical, but decide to comply. Mark, who has been put to sleep during much of this by Merlin, is awakened and taken by Frost to the Objectivity Room. While Merlin and the tramp are given the grand tour by Wither, Mark is placed before a crucifix and told to stamp on it and insult it in various other ways. He refuses, though he does not understand quite why he does so. Soon they are joined in the room by the others. At that point Jules, the putative Director of the Institute, arrives for a banquet at which he is to speak. He is introduced to the tramp (whose name is given as Dr. Ambrosius) and to Merlin, who is said to be his interpreter. Mark and Straik are also present. Jules is somewhat put out because of all these unfamiliar people and because he is not being treated with the dignity to which he is accustomed; sadly, the little man does not realize that he is a figurehead and thinks that he is really in charge of the N.I.C.E. In fact, he knows nothing of what is happening at Belbury.

After dinner, Jules rises to give his speech, but spouts nothing but complete gibberish. When the crowd begins laughing, Wither rises to calm them, but he, too, speaks nothing but nonsense though he thinks he is talking normally. Merlin had placed the curse of Babel on the N.I.C.E. Soon people everywhere start shouting, pushing one another, and running. Frost sends a note to the Fairy, but it, too, is gibberish. Miss Hardcastle decides to take action; she locks the doors and begins shooting, killing Jules and several others in the process. By now the room is a complete riot, and Merlin and the tramp have escaped. Merlin releases both the prisoners and the menagerie. Soon a tiger appears in the room, increasing the panic; when it becomes frightened, it attacks and kills the Fairy. More and more animals enter, killing many in the terrified crowd. An elephant kills Steele. Meanwhile, the tramp has escaped and Mr. Maggs, bearing a note from Ivy, has headed for St. Anne's, as has Mark, who was knocked unconscious in the melee but revived by Merlin. Mr. Bultitude tags along after Merlin through the corridors of Belbury. Wither, Straik, and Filostrato flee the confusion. Wither and Straik take Filostrato to the room where the Head is kept and, much to his surprise, the Head begins speaking without the dials being turned; all three strip themselves naked, then the other two behead Filostrato as a sacrifice to their Masters. Wither then kills Straik, but as he tries to leave the room, he is overwhelmed by Mr. Bultitude. Feverstone tries to flee in a car, but discovers that the car is being controlled by Merlin, who is in the back seat. After a very rough ride, he crashes, tries to flee to Edgestow, but is killed in the landslide that destroys the town. Frost, realizing that all is lost, takes a can of gasoline into the Head's room, locks himself in, and lights a match. Only then do his Masters allow him to realize that his denial of the existence of the soul is horribly mistaken, though he is unable to respond to the terrible discovery.

Mark makes his way toward St. Anne's, but hesitates because he feels he does not belong. He wants to see Jane in the worst way, but feels unworthy of her and intends to give her the freedom that is the only gift he has left to give. Meanwhile the women prepare for their last dinner together, which the men are going to cook. They dress in lovely gowns, each chosen by the others. As they finish their preparations, they hear a loud noise - Edgestow, and Belbury with it, is falling into a deep chasm that has opened up in the earth, though the common people of Edgestow manage to escape before the earthquake hits. After dinner, the members of the company speak of Ransom's impending departure for Perelandra, where he will remain with Arthur and others who never died. They speak of the ongoing struggle between the forces of good and evil in every nation, and of the disastrous consequences of the ideas taught by university professors who never thought their ideas would be put into practice. Then they hear a noise at the door, and Mr. Bultitude comes lumbering in, bringing another bear with him. Soon animals of all kinds, two by two, are frolicking around the house and grounds - Perelandra is near, ready to take Ransom away. Tom Maggs arrives, and he and Ivy go to their room, then Mark too comes, and Jane goes to be with him. Both are shy and afraid of being rejected by the other, but Perelandra brings them gently together as Ransom is whisked away into the Heavens.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

"In reality marriage had proved to be a door out of a world of work and comradeship and laughter and innumerable things to do, into something like solitary confinement." (Jane, ch.1, p.13)

"Total war is the most humane in the long run." (Feverstone, ch.2, p.35)

"I should have thought the objects of the N.I.C.E. are pretty clear. It's the first attempt to take applied science seriously from the national point of view." (Busby, ch.2, p.37)

"The real thing is that this time we're going to get science applied to social problems and backed by the whole force of the state, just as war has been backed by the whole force of the state in the past." (Mark, ch.2, p.38)

"It does really look as if we now had the power to dig ourselves in as a species for a pretty staggering period, to take control of our own destiny. If Science is really given a free hand it can now take over the human race and re-condition it: make man a really efficient animal. If it doesn't - well, we're done." (Feverstone, ch.2, p.41)

"Man has got to take charge of Man. That means, remember, that some men have got to take charge of the rest - which is another reason for cashing in on it as soon as one can. You and I want to be the people who do the taking charge, not the ones who are taken charge of. . . . Quite simple and obvious things at first - sterilization of the unfit, liquidation of backward races (we don't want any dead weights), selective breeding. Then real education, including pre-natal education. By real education I mean one that has no 'take it or leave it' nonsense. A real education makes the patient what it wants infallibly: whatever he or his parents try to do about it. Of course, it'll have to be mainly psychological at first. But we'll get on to biochemical conditioning in the end and direct manipulation of the brain. . . ." (Feverstone, ch.2, p.42)

“You are a more important person than you imagine.” (Grace Ironwood, ch.3, p.64)

“Here in the Institute, we’re backing the crusade against Red Tape.” (Fairy Hardcastle, ch.3, p.69)

“You’ve got to get the ordinary man into the state in which he says ‘Sadism’ automatically when he hears the word Punishment. And then one would have *carte blanche*.” (Fairy Hardcastle, ch.3, p.69)

“What had hampered every English police force up to date was precisely the idea of deserved punishment. For desert was always finite: you could do so much to the criminal and no more. Remedial treatment, on the other hand, need have no fixed limit; it could go on till it effected a cure, and those who were carrying it out would decide when *that* was. And if cure were humane and desirable, how much more prevention? Soon anyone who had ever been in the hands of the police at all would come under the N.I.C.E.; in the end, every citizen.” (Fairy Hardcastle, ch.3, p.69)

“There *are* no sciences like Sociology. And if I found chemistry beginning to fit in with a secret police run by a middle-aged virago who doesn’t wear corsets and a scheme for taking away his farm and his shop and his children from every Englishman, I’d let chemistry go to the devil and take up gardening again.” (Hingest, ch.3, p.70-71)

“There are a dozen views about everything until you know the answer. Then there’s never more than one.” (Hingest, ch.3, p.72)

“Some resentment against love itself, and therefore against Mark, for thus invading her life, remained. She was at least very vividly aware of how much a woman gives up in getting married. Mark seemed to her insufficiently aware of this. Though she did not formulate it, this fear of being invaded and entangled was the deepest ground of her determination not to have a child - or not for a long time yet. One had one’s own life to live.” (Jane, ch.3, p.72-73)

“Jane found Mother Dimble an embarrassing person to share a room with because she said prayers.” (ch.4, p.77)

“That is precisely the subterfuge by which the World, the organization and body of Death, has sidetracked and emasculated the teaching of Jesus, and turned into priestcraft and mysticism the plain demand of the Lord for righteousness and judgment here and now. The Kingdom of God is to be realised here - in this world. And it will be. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow. In that name I dissociate myself completely from all the organised religion that has yet been seen in the world.” (Straik, ch.4, p.78)

“The *real* resurrection is even now taking place. The real life everlasting. Here in this world. You will see it.” (Straik, ch.4, p.80)

“His education had had the curious effect of making things that he read and wrote more real to him than things he saw.” (Mark, ch. 4, p.86)

“Men hated women who had things wrong with them, specially queer, unusual things.” (ch.4, p.89)

“Don’t you understand *anything*? Isn’t it absolutely essential to keep a fierce Left and a fierce Right, both on their toes and each terrified of the other? That’s how we get things done. Any opposition to the N.I.C.E. is represented as a Left racket in the Right papers and a right racket in the Left papers. If it’s properly done, you get each side outbidding the other in support of us - to refute the enemy slanders. *Of course* we’re non-political. The real power always is.” (Fairy Hardcastle, ch.5, p.99)

“This was the first thing Mark had been asked to do which he himself, before he did it, clearly knew to be criminal. But the moment of his consent almost escaped his notice; certainly, there was no struggle, no sense of turning a corner.” (ch.6, p.130)

“There are traitors in the camp. I am not afraid to say so, whoever they may be. They may be so-called religious people. They may be financial interests. They may be the old cobweb-spinning professors and philosophers of Edgestow University itself. They may be Jews. They may be lawyers. I don’t care who they are, but I have one thing to tell them. Take care. The people of England are not going to stand this. We are not going to have the Institute sabotaged.” (Mark in an editorial, ch.6, p.134)

“Jane looked; and instantly her world was unmade.” (ch.7, p.142)

“She had (or so she had believed) disliked bearded faces except for old men with white hair. But that was because she had long since forgotten the imagined Arthur of childhood - and the imagined Solomon too. Solomon - for the first time in many years the bright solar blend of king and lover and magician which hangs about that name stole back upon her mind. For the first time in all those years she tasted the word *King* itself with all the linked associations of battle, marriage, priesthood, mercy, and power.” (ch.7, p.143)

“All the most intolerable questions he might ask, all the most extravagant things he might make her do, flashed through her mind in a fatuous medley. For all power of resistance seemed to have been drained away from her and she was left without protection.” (ch.7, p.144)

“Child, it is not a question of how you look on marriage but how my Masters look on it.” (Ransom, ch.7, p.146)

“They would say that you do not fail in obedience through lack of love, but have lost love because you never attempted obedience.” (Ransom, ch.7, p.147)

“It is not your fault. They never warned you. No one has ever told you that obedience - humility - is an erotic necessity. You are putting equality just where it ought not to be.” (Ransom, ch.7, p.148)

“At the very moment when her mind was most filled with another man there arose, clouded with some undefined emotion, a resolution to give Mark much more than she had ever given him before, and a feeling that in so doing she would be really giving it to the Director.” (ch.7, p.151)

“Certainly she was looking well: she was looking unusually well. And, once more, there was little vanity in this. For beauty was made for others. Her beauty belonged to the Director. It belonged to him so completely that he could even decide not to keep it for himself but to order that it be given to another, by an act of obedience lower, and therefore higher, more unconditional and therefore more delighting, than if he had demanded it for himself.” (ch.7, p.152)

“As you are aware, I always deplore anything that is not perfectly humane; but that is quite consistent with the position that if more drastic expedients have to be used then they must be used thoroughly. *Moderate* pain, such as any ordinary degree of endurance can resist, is always a mistake. It is no true kindness to the prisoner.” (Wither, ch.8, p.161)

“Her mere presence would have made all the laughter of the Inner Ring sound metallic, unreal; and what he now regarded as common prudence would seem to her, and through her to himself, mere flattery, back-biting and toad-eating. Jane in the middle of Belbury would turn the whole of Belbury into a vast vulgarity.” (ch.8, p.171)

“In us organic life has produced Mind. It has done its work. After that we want no more of it. We do not want the world any longer furred over with organic life, like what you call the blue mould - all sprouting and budding and breeding and decaying. We must get rid of it. By little and little, of course. Slowly we learn how. Learn to make our brains live with less and less body: learn to build our bodies directly with chemicals, no longer have to stuff them full of dead brutes and weeds. Learn how to reproduce ourselves without copulation.” (Filostrato, ch.8, p.173)

“You would understand if you were peasants. Who would try to work with stallions and bulls? No, no; we want geldings and oxen. There will never be peace and order and discipline so long as there is sex. When man has thrown it away, then he will become finally governable.” (Filostrato, ch.8, p.173)

“This Institute . . . is for something better than housing and vaccinations and faster trains and curing the people of cancer. It is for the conquest of death: or for the conquest of organic life, if you prefer. They are the same thing. It is to bring out of that cocoon of organic life which sheltered the babyhood of mind the New Man, the man who will not die, the artificial man, free from Nature. Nature is the ladder we have climbed up by, now we kick her away.” (Filostrato, ch.8, p.177)

“The Head has sent for you. Do you understand - *the Head*? You will look upon one who was killed and is still alive. The resurrection of Jesus in the Bible was a symbol: tonight you shall see what it symbolised. This is real Man at last, and it claims all our allegiance.” (Straik, ch.8, p.177)

“At first, of course, the power will be confined to a number - a small number - of individual men. Those who are selected for eternal life.” (Filostrato, ch.8, p.178)

“You know as well as I do that Man’s power over Nature means the power of some men over other men with Nature as the instrument.” (Filostrato, ch.8, p.178)

“Don’t you see that we are offering you the unspeakable glory of being present at the creation of God Almighty? Here, in this house, you shall meet the first sketch of the real God. It is a man - or a being made by man - who will finally ascend the throne of the universe. And rule forever.” (Straik, ch.8, p.179)

“It must be remembered that in Mark’s mind hardly one rag of noble thought, either Christian or Pagan, had a secure lodging. His education had been neither scientific nor classical - merely ‘Modern.’” (ch.9, p.185)

“If anything wants Andrew MacPhee to believe in its existence, I’ll be obliged if it will present itself in full daylight, with a sufficient number of witnesses present, and not get shy if you hold up a camera or a thermometer.” (MacPhee, ch.9, p.193)

“Then what we are up against is a criminal’s brain swollen to super-human proportions and experiencing a mode of consciousness which we can’t imagine, but which is presumably a consciousness of agony and hatred.” (Dimble, ch.9, p.196)

“It is the beginning of what is really a new species - the Chosen Heads who never die. They will call it the next step in evolution. And henceforward, all the creatures that you and I call human are mere candidates for admission to the new species or else its slaves - perhaps its food.” (Ransom, ch.9, p.197)

“I am the Director. Do you think I would claim the authority I do if the relation between us depended either on your choice or mine? You never chose me. I never chose you. . . . You and I have not started or devised this: it has descended on us - sucked us into itself, if you like. It is, no doubt, an organisation: but we are not the organisers.” (Ransom, ch.9, p.198)

“When the new power from Belbury joins up with the old power under Bragdon Wood, Logres - indeed Man - will be almost surrounded. For us everything turns on preventing that junction.” (Ransom, ch.9, p.199-200)

“The physical sciences, good and innocent in themselves, had already, even in Ransom’s own time, begun to be warped, had been subtly manoeuvred in a certain direction. Despair of objective truth had been increasingly insinuated into the scientists; indifference to it, and a concentration upon mere power, had been the result.” (ch.9, p.203)

“Perhaps few or none of the people at Belbury knew what was happening; but once it happened, they would be like straw in fire. What should they find incredible, since they believed no longer in a rational universe? What should they regard as too obscene, since they held that all

morality was a mere subjective by-product of the physical and economic situations of men? The time was ripe. From the point of view which is accepted in Hell, the whole history of our Earth had led up to this moment.” (ch.9, p.203)

“Did you fail to make things clear because you really wanted not to? Just wanted to hurt and humiliate? To enjoy your own self-righteousness? Is there a whole Belbury inside you too?” (Dimble, ch.10, p.224)

“Say that you come in the name of God and all angels and in the power of the planets from one who sits today in the seat of the Pendragon and command him to come with you.” (Ransom, ch.10, p.228)

“This was the language spoken before the Fall and beyond the Moon and the meanings were not given to the syllables by chance, or skill, or long tradition, but truly inherent in them as the shape of the great Sun is inherent in the little waterdrop. This was Language herself, as she first sprang at Maleldil’s bidding out of the molten quicksilver of the star called Mercury on Earth, but Viritrilbia in Deep Heaven.” (Ransom, ch.10, p.229)

“If it had ever occurred to her to question whether all these things might be the reality behind what she had been taught at school as ‘religion,’ she put the thought aside.” (ch.11, p.234)

“Of course, nothing is so much to be desired as the greatest possible unity. You will not suspect me of under-rating that aspect of our orders. Any fresh individual brought into that unity would be a source of the most intense satisfaction to - ah - all concerned. I desire the closest possible bond. I would welcome an interpenetration of personalities so close, so irrevocable, that it almost transcends individuality. You need not doubt that I would open my arms to receive - to absorb - to assimilate this young man.” (Wither, ch.11, p.243)

“In his normal conditions, explanations that laid on impersonal forces outside himself the responsibility for all this life of dust and broken bottles would have occurred at once to his mind and been at once accepted. It would have been ‘the system’ or ‘an inferiority complex’ due to his parents, or the peculiarities of the age. None of these things occurred to him now.” (ch.11, p.247)

“Death itself did not seem more frightening than the fact that only six hours ago he would in some measure have trusted this man, welcomed his confidence, and even made believe that his society was not disagreeable.” (ch.11, p.248)

“My dear young friend, the golden rule is very simple. There are only two errors which would be fatal to one placed in the peculiar situation which parts of your previous conduct have unfortunately created for you. On the one hand, anything like a lack of initiative or enterprise would be disastrous. On the other, the slightest approach to unauthorised action - anything which suggested that you were assuming a liberty of decision which, in all the circumstances, is not really yours - might have consequences from which even I could not protect you.” (Wither, ch.12, p.253)

“The effect of modern war is to eliminate retrogressive types, while sparing the technocracy and increasing its hold upon public affairs. In the new age, what has hitherto been merely the intellectual nucleus of the race is to become, by gradual stages, the race itself.” (Frost, ch.12, p.258)

“For here, here surely at last (so his desire whispered to him) was the true inner circle of all, the circle whose centre was outside the human race - the ultimate secret, the supreme power, the last initiation. The fact that it was almost completely horrible did not in the least diminish its attraction.” (ch.12, p.259-260)

“The approval of one’s own conscience is a very heady draught; and specially for those who are not accustomed to it.” (ch.12, p.268)

“In the sphere of Venus I learned war. In this age Lurga shall descend. I am the Pendragon.” (Ransom, ch.13, p.274)

“For a hundred generations in two lines the begetting of this child was prepared; and unless God should rip up the work of time, such seed, and such an hour, in such a land, shall never be again.” (Merlin, ch.13, p.278-279)

“Remember, when we first knew that you would be awaked, we thought you would be on the side of the enemy. And because our Lord does all things for each, one of the purposes of your reawakening was that your own soul should be saved.” (Ransom, ch.13, p.289)

“No power that is merely earthly will serve against the Hideous Strength.” (Ransom, ch.13, p.289)

“Has not our Fair Lord made it a law for Himself that He will not send down the Powers to mend or mar in this Earth until the end of all things? Or is this the end that is now coming to pass?” (Merlin, ch.13, p.290)

“Greater spirits than Malacandra and Perelandra will descend this time. We are in God’s hands. It may unmake us both. There is no promise that either you or I will save our lives or our reason. I do not know how we can dare to look upon their faces; but I know we cannot dare to look upon God’s if we refuse this enterprise.” (Ransom, ch.13, p.292)

“They have gone to the gods who would not have come to them, and pulled down Deep Heaven on their heads. Therefore they will die.” (Ransom, ch.13, p.294)

“The philosophy which Frost was expounding was by no means unfamiliar to him. He recognised it at once as the logical conclusion of thoughts which he had always hitherto accepted and which at this moment he found himself irrevocably rejecting. The knowledge that his own assumptions led to Frost’s position combined with what he saw in Frost’s face and what he had experienced in this very cell, affected a complete conversion. All the philosophers and evangelists in the world might not have done the job so neatly.” (ch.14, p.296)

“They were, in a sense, playing quite fair with him - offering him the very same initiation through which they themselves had passed and which had divided them from humanity, distending and dissipating Wither into a shapeless ruin while it condensed and sharpened Frost into the hard, bright, little needle that he now was.” (ch.14, p.299)

“The male you could have escaped, for it exists only on the biological level. But the masculine none of us can escape. What is above and beyond all things is so masculine that we are all feminine in relation to it. You had better agree with your adversary quickly.” (Ransom, ch.14, p.316)

“In fighting those who serve devils one always has this on one’s side; their Masters hate them as much as they hate us. The moment we disable the human pawns enough to make them useless to Hell, their own Masters finish the work. They break their tools.” (Ransom, ch.14, p.317)

“For Ransom, whose study had been for many years in the realm of words, it was heavenly pleasure. He found himself sitting within the very heart of language, in the white-hot furnace of essential speech.” (ch.15, p.322)

“Now whereas Jane had abandoned Christianity in early childhood, along with her belief in fairies and Santa Claus, Mark had never believed in it at all. At this moment, therefore, it crossed his mind for the very first time that there might conceivably be something in it.” (ch.15, p.334)

“They that have despised the word of God, from them shall the word of man also be taken away.” (Merlin, ch.16, p.351)

“He had long since ceased to believe in knowledge itself. What had been in his far-off youth a merely aesthetic repugnance to realities that were crude or vulgar, had deepened and darkened, year after year, into a fixed refusal of everything that was in any degree other than himself. He had passed from Hegel into Hume, thence through Pragmatism, and thence through Logical Positivism, and out at last into the complete void.” (Wither, ch.16, p.353)

“Like the clockwork figure he had chosen to be, his stiff body, now terribly cold, walked back into the Objective Room, poured out the petrol and threw a lighted match into the pile. Not till then did his controllers allow him to suspect that death itself might not after all cure the illusion of being a soul - nay, might prove the entry into a world where that illusion raged infinite and unchecked. Escape for the soul, if not for the body, was offered him. He became able to know (and simultaneously refused the knowledge) that he had been wrong from the beginning, that souls and personal responsibility existed. He half saw: he wholly hated. The physical torture of the burning was not fiercer than his hatred of that. With one supreme effort he flung himself back into his illusion. In that attitude eternity overtook him as sunrise in old tales overtakes and turns them into unchangeable stone.” (Frost, ch.16, p.358)

“He now thought that with all his life-long eagerness to reach an inner circle he had chosen the *wrong* circle.” (Mark, ch.17, p.360)

“When Logres really dominates Britain, when the goddess Reason, the divine clearness, is really enthroned in France, when the order of Heaven is really followed in China - why, then it will be spring.” (Dimble, ch.17, p.371)

“Was there a single doctrine practised at Belbury which hadn’t been preached by some lecturer at Edgestow? Oh, of course, they never thought any one would *act* on their theories! No one was more astonished than they when what they’d been talking of for years suddenly took on reality. But it was their own child coming back to them: grown up and unrecognisable, but their own.” (Denniston, ch.17, p.371)

“You will have no more dreams. Have children instead.” (Ransom, ch.17, p.380)

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. The last book of C.S. Lewis’ Space Trilogy, *That Hideous Strength*, is set on earth rather than on one of the other planets. What is the significance of this fact? Why does locating the story on our own planet serve as a fitting climax to the series and its themes?
2. C.S. Lewis, in *That Hideous Strength*, makes use of several aspects of the Arthurian legend. Analyze the ways in which the legend of King Arthur serves as an appropriate instrument for communicating the themes of Lewis’ science fiction novel.
3. Analyze the structure of C.S. Lewis’ *That Hideous Strength*. Pay special attention to the parallelism between St. Anne’s and Belbury with regard to organization, incidents, and even language.
4. Use C.S. Lewis’ *That Hideous Strength* to analyze the author’s view of science. Does Lewis oppose science in general, or merely the abuse of science? Support your answer with specifics from the novel.
5. Discuss the relationship between the natural sciences and the social sciences in C.S. Lewis’ *That Hideous Strength*. In particular, how does the confluence of the two at Belbury reveal Lewis’ attitude toward and fears about the direction of modern society?
6. Compare and contrast the character of Ransom in C.S. Lewis’ *That Hideous Strength* with the presentation of the same figure in the other two books of the Space Trilogy. Would you argue that he is basically the same person in the three stories, or do you see significant differences in his personality in the third book?

7. In C.S. Lewis' Space Trilogy, the cast of villains changes. In *Out of the Silent Planet*, Weston and Devine are the villains of the piece. *Perelandra* details the defeat and destruction of Weston (Devine is not in the story), while *That Hideous Strength* narrates the defeat of Devine (known as Feverstone in the story) and his colleagues. Discuss the appropriateness of focusing on Weston in the middle book and Devine in the last one. Why do you think Lewis made this choice? Support your conclusions with specifics from the two novels.
8. Discuss the picture of love and marriage presented in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*. While you will certainly give special attention to the Studdocks in your answer, consider also other couples like the Dimbles, the Maggses, and the Dennistons, and do not forget *Perelandra* herself.
9. Discuss the function of the Head in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*. Why did the Macrobes choose to use the head of Alcasan to communicate with their underlings rather than just speaking to them directly? Consider both the role of the Head in the plot and the way in which it contributes to the themes Lewis seeks to develop.
10. Compare and contrast the totalitarian states pictured in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* and George Orwell's *1984*, which were written only a few years apart. Address specifically what the two authors considered to be the major threats to Western civilization.
11. Compare and contrast the views of human sexuality found in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* and Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Despite the radical differences between the two novels, how do they present similar dystopian distortions of human sexuality?
12. Discuss the blending of Christianity and mythology in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*. How does Lewis see the two as fitting together? Is such a combination biblically justifiable? Why or why not?
13. When C.S. Lewis wrote *That Hideous Strength*, genetic engineering and cloning did not yet exist. In what ways might he have utilized these technologies in his story had he been writing in the twenty-first century? How does the message of the novel impact our understanding of these things?
14. "The paths to Heaven and Hell are traveled in tiny steps." How does C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* illustrate the truth of this statement? Consider particularly the characters of Mark and Jane Studdock and the different directions they take in the story.
15. Peer pressure is not just a problem for teenagers. Discuss the role played by peer pressure in the life of Mark Studdock as it is presented in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*. What lessons is Lewis trying to teach about the dangers of living to please other people? What does the Bible tell us about this subject?

16. C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* was written in 1945, right at the end of World War II. How do the political conditions of the time in which the book was written influence the content of the story? Is the social criticism in the novel more directed toward Nazi Germany, Soviet Russia, or contemporary Britain? Why do you think so? Support your conclusion with details from the novel.
17. What are the dangers inherent in treating man on a scientific basis? Use C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* to answer the question.
18. Compare and contrast the N.I.C.E. in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* with the environmental movement today. Though one wanted to destroy nature and the other wants to preserve it, what philosophical foundations do they share? In what ways may Lewis' "modern fairy tale for grown-ups" serve as a critique of environmentalism? In what ways does it advocate a Christian environmentalism?
19. Early in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*, Mark Studdock describes the goals of the N.I.C.E. by saying, "The real thing is that this time we're going to get science applied to social problems and backed by the whole force of the state, just as war has been backed by the whole force of the state in the past." Discuss the validity of his analogy. How was the work of the N.I.C.E. like war, and how was it different? Are both tasks equally deserving of support by the force of the state? What makes the difference?
20. Discuss the view of education presented in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*. Early in the book, Lord Feverstone says, "Man has got to take charge of Man. That means, remember, that some men have got to take charge of the rest - which is another reason for cashing in on it as soon as one can. You and I want to be the people who do the taking charge, not the ones who are taken charge of. . . . Quite simple and obvious things at first - sterilization of the unfit, liquidation of backward races (we don't want any dead weights), selective breeding. Then real education, including pre-natal education. By real education I mean one that has no 'take it or leave it' nonsense. A real education makes the patient what it wants infallibly: whatever he or his parents try to do about it. Of course, it'll have to be mainly psychological at first. But we'll get on to biochemical conditioning in the end and direct manipulation of the brain. . . ." To what extent have the ideas described by Feverstone been incorporated into the modern educational system? Was Lewis' warning justified? Why or why not?
21. Discuss the consequences of humanistic education pictured in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*. Near the end of the book, Arthur Denniston remarks, "Was there a single doctrine practised at Belbury which hadn't been preached by some lecturer at Edgestow? Oh, of course, they never thought any one would *act* on their theories! No one was more astonished than they when what they'd been talking of for years suddenly took on reality." Give examples from the book and from modern life of the teachings of modern educational theory coming home to roost in hideous ways.

22. In C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*, the manipulators of the N.I.C.E. frequently speak of why society should practice conditioning rather than punishment, taking the cynical view that the latter is finite while the former has no limits. To what extent has this social science view of punishment come to dominate contemporary views on the subject? Are the consequences what Lewis feared them to be? To what extent?
23. William Hingest, the chemist who is murdered for trying to leave the N.I.C.E. in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*, argues that "there *are* no sciences like Sociology." Why does Lewis argue, through this eminent scientist, that the social sciences are not sciences at all? What is the danger of treating them like sciences? How is that danger evident in contemporary society? Support your answer with specifics from the book and from modern life.
24. Discuss the extent to which C.S. Lewis uses the character of Jane Studdock to critique the feminism of his day in *That Hideous Strength*. Are his criticisms valid? Is Lewis' view of women biblical? Why or why not?
25. Analyze the character of Rev. Straik in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*. To what extent does he represent Lewis' criticism of the liberal theology of his day? Use your own knowledge of mid-century liberalism to connect the ravings of the mad preacher to movements about which you have learned.
26. When Ransom is instructing Jane Studdock about the meaning and practice of true love in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*, he says, "you do not fail in obedience through lack of love, but have lost love because you never attempted obedience." Why are obedience and love inextricably intertwined, both on the human and divine levels? Illustrate your answer both from the novel and from Scripture.
27. In C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*, various characters such as Wither, Frost, Straik, Filostrato, Feverstone, and Hardcastle try to explain the essence of the N.I.C.E. to Mark Studdock. Choose three of these and analyze the differences in their perspectives. Which comes closest to describing the real nature of the Institute? Why do you think so?
28. In C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*, the leading figures of the N.I.C.E. all have differing explanations for why the organization exists and what its real purpose may be. Why does Lewis have his villains present so many contradictory views of their actions? What might he be saying by choosing to present his force of evil in this way?
29. Discuss the role of Andrew MacPhee in the company at St. Anne's in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*. Why does Lewis plant an honest skeptic among the ranks of the faithful?
30. Discuss the role of language in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*. Include such elements of the story as the descriptions of Old Solar, the involvement of Viritrilbia, and of course the Babel-like denouement in constructing your answer.

31. C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* draws heavily upon the imagery of the Tower of Babel, even in the title for the work chosen by the author. Why did Lewis choose this foundational image? Compare and contrast the sin of the tower-builders in Genesis 11 with that of the Inner Circle at Belbury.
32. Compare and contrast the views of demons presented in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* and *The Screwtape Letters*. How are the machinations of Screwtape and his nephew similar to those of the Masters of Belbury? Consider both the nature of the respective temptations and the desired outcomes of those temptations.
33. Near the end of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*, he says, "Hence we may look with some confidence to a secure future of great length. And as natural selection works solely by and for the good of each being, all corporeal and mental endowments will tend to progress toward perfection." To what extent is C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* a response to this optimism inherent in early evolutionary theory? Be sure to cite specifics from the novel to support your arguments.
34. Some critics argue that the N.I.C.E. in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* is intended to be a picture of the Fabian Society, a group of British socialists who renounced the Marxist revolutionary ethos in favor of a gradual assumption of power through parliamentary means, by gaining control of the bureaucracy that really ran the country. Among the Fabians were men like George Bernard Shaw and H.G. Wells; the latter openly advocated the kinds of removal of the unfit preached by radicals such as Margaret Sanger in the United States. In the light of this information, compare and contrast Lewis' novel with Wells' *The Time Machine*, noting particularly the nature of the social criticism found in each and the solutions proposed for dealing with human problems.
35. When George Orwell wrote a review of C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*, he said, "It probably would have been a better book if the magical element had been left out. For in essence it is a crime story, and the miraculous happenings, though they grow more frequent toward the end, are not integral to it." Do you agree? Assess the extent to which the "magical" elements of the novel are central or peripheral to the themes of the story.
36. Four years before the publication of *1984*, George Orwell wrote a review of C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*. In it he briefly described the machinations of the N.I.C.E. and concluded that "there is nothing outrageously improbable in such a conspiracy." How does Orwell's famous dystopian fantasy show that he took seriously the threats to human society posed by some of the thinkers of his day? Does he see the same threats that Lewis does? Why or why not?
37. When George Orwell wrote a review of C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*, he loved the part about the N.I.C.E. and its conspiracies, but hated the ending, arguing that "the book ends in a way that is so preposterous that it does not even succeed in being horrible in spite of much bloodshed." What is Orwell missing here? Why is the ending totally appropriate rather than being completely preposterous? Be sure to comment on the different perspectives of the two writers in answering the question.

38. When George Orwell wrote a review of C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*, he argued that the supernatural element destroyed the suspense of what is otherwise a good story. He said, "When one is told that God and the Devil are in conflict one always knows which side is going to win. The whole drama of the struggle against evil lies in the fact that one does not have supernatural aid." Assess the suspense value of Lewis' novel. Does knowing that good will triumph over evil ruin the impact of the story? Why or why not?
39. Compare and contrast the picture of the Head presented in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* with the concept of a slicer found in David Walton's *Terminal Mind*. Give special attention to the uses made by their creators of these techno-humans. Do both authors share a similar view of the dangers of unrestricted scientific endeavor? Why or why not? Illustrate your arguments with details from both stories.
40. Discuss the role of personal responsibility in C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*. Be sure to consider the connection between free will and responsibility, and develop what Lewis has to say about that connection both through the words of the leaders of the N.I.C.E. and those of Mark Studdock and the company at St. Anne's. Why does materialism ultimately and inevitably lead to the denial of human responsibility?
41. In commenting on C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength*, John West of the Discovery Institute described the book as a critique of "coercive utopianism." Why should materialists who do not believe in objective truth or reason conclude that they have the right to control everyone else's lives? Describe the line of reasoning that leads to this conclusion from the words of the novel, and illustrate it with examples from contemporary society.
42. The theoretical foundation for C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* can be found in the third lecture of his *The Abolition of Man*. Discuss how the ideas presented in the lecture are worked out in fictional form in the novel. Choose three key points from the lecture and show how the novel powerfully brings them into stark relief and demonstrates the dangers about which Lewis is warning his readers.
43. Consider the attack on modern principles of jurisprudence, especially as they have been influenced by the social sciences, found in Lecture III of C.S. Lewis' *The Abolition of Man* and illustrated in *That Hideous Strength*. While critics today often see psychology as a means of preventing justice by allowing criminals to escape the punishment they deserve, Lewis argues that the opposite is in fact the case - that the introduction of psychology allows the state to punish the criminal without limits. Does the fact that the lectures were given in 1943 affect the substance of his argument? Evaluate his argument, considering the historical context in which it was developed, and illustrate it with examples from your own reading and experience.
44. Discuss the significance of the physical battle between Ransom and Weston in C.S. Lewis' *Perelandra*. Besides the obvious allusion to Genesis 3:15, what is the fight intended to represent? Is it intended to be apocalyptic in the same way as the climax of *That Hideous Strength*? Why or why not?

45. Both B.F. Skinner's *Walden Two* and C.S. Lewis' *That Hideous Strength* picture societies subject to massive environmental control, but the first is utopian while the second portrays such manipulation as horrifying. To what extent is Lewis' novel a critique of the principles and practices pictured as ideal in *Walden Two*? Cite incidents and quotations from both novels in your analysis.